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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000768

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SF](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MAKONI ALLEGEDLY BEING APPROACHED BY BOTH MDC AND  
ZANU-PF

REF: PRETORIA 139

PRETORIA 00000768 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Prominent Johannesburg-based Zimbabwean businessman and publisher Trevor Ncube on 10 April told PolOff that presidential candidate Simba Makoni is being approached by both the MDC and some members of both ZANU-PF and the security services to join their camps, but did not reveal in which direction Makoni was leaning. Ncube criticized the MDC's behavior during elections, believing they waited too long to speak out and therefore lost a valuable opportunity to get people on the streets. According to Ncube's sources, Mugabe wants to annul the 29 March elections and have a new election as soon as possible. "Pockets" of the ZANU-PF politburo are on board with the idea, but blame Mugabe for losing the election for them and would like Mugabe to anoint a successor. END SUMMARY.

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MAKONI ON FENCE  
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¶2. (C) On 10 April, PolOff met with prominent Johannesburg-based Zimbabwean Trevor Ncube to inquire about losing presidential candidate Simba Makoni's strategy for a potential run-off in Zimbabwe. Ncube said that Makoni has been approached by the MDC to form a coalition but complained that MDC did not make an overture until Friday 05 April, only after the MDC realized that the Senate was evenly split. "MDC was so triumphant, it was sickening," he said. When asked why MDC and Makoni did not form a coalition before the election, Ncube laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of Strive Masiyiwa "who should not be trusted" and "whose ego got in the way." According to Ncube, Masiyiwa was annoyed that Makoni did not approach him directly and was the main "stumbling block" to a MDC-Makoni coalition, despite all outward appearances that he was working a deal. When asked what the possibilities were of MDC and Makoni coming together without Masiyiwa's intervention, Ncube responded, "Unfortunately, Strive's got the money."

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ELECTION MUSINGS  
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¶3. (C) Ncube, who has openly admitted he is not a fan of MDC Leader Morgan Tsvangirai, criticized Tsvangirai's actions since the 29 March election. Ncube accused Tsvangirai of

lacking leadership "over and over again" and said that "he is out of his depth." He believes that Tsvangirai should not have waited five days to announce he had won the presidency. He would have advised Tsvangirai to deliver an "I have a dream speech" to give people hope and to get people on the streets in an act of civil disobedience immediately. Instead, he believes Tsvangirai's delay allowed ZANU-PF "to recover at a time when they were stumbling."

14. (C) When asked why Makoni had not been out delivering a message of hope or civil disobedience -- or any message at all, in fact -- Ncube said that Makoni is "cautious; he's a thinker." He also said that it was obvious that Solomon Mujuru did not deliver votes for Makoni as promised. This is evidenced, he believes, by the fact that Makoni got 80 percent of his votes from Matebeleland.

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ADVICE FOR WASHINGTON  
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15. (C) Ncube said that "everyone's impression is that Tsvangirai doesn't do anything without Washington's approval

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or direction." He also said he had heard that Washington was adamantly opposed to a Makoni/MDC coalition before the election. Ncube asserted that using inflammatory language against Zimbabwe is not helping anyone but Mugabe. He advised the U.S. should come across as impartial, adding that "the facts can speak for themselves." He then said, "This isn't Iraq" and argued that by calling Mugabe a "disgrace," Washington was giving Mugabe opportunities to persuade Zimbabweans that in fact there is a Western conspiracy against him. "Stop name-calling because frankly, Mugabe can do it better than anyone," he advised.

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RUMORS ALIVE AND WELL  
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16. (C) Ncube said the latest rumor he is hearing, "which is most worrisome," is that Mugabe intends to annul the 29 March election and call for fresh elections as soon as possible. He believes some ZANU-PF Politburo members are on board with the idea of a fresh election, he said, with the stipulation that Mugabe, whom they believe cost the election, is not the ZANU-PF candidate. Ncube said that some Politburo members want Mugabe to lay out his succession plan. Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa was selected to go and ask Mugabe for his thoughts, but refused, he said. Ncube still believes that Emmerson Mnangagwa is Mugabe's heir apparent, but does not believe this would work given the Mujuru's camp opposition to him. Ncube also said that Makoni has been approached by "pockets" of both the Politburo and the security services to run as the ZANU-PF's candidate, but that Makoni is reluctant unless he can "restructure ZANU-PF," which will not be popular. Though Ncube never addressed the preferred SAG solution of a unity government, he did say that for ZANU-PF members, even mentioning the MDC raises a red flag.

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EMBASSY HARARE COMMENT  
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17. (C) From previous conversations with Ncube and others, we believe that Makoni, Mutumbara, and their allies will back Tsvangirai in a runoff election. Ncube is obviously put out

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that his erstwhile business partner, Masiyiwa, and Tsvangirai have mostly ignored him and Makoni in both the pre-election

campaign and in post-election strategizing. He is right to complain about lack of consultation now. Ncube and Makoni both have extensive knowledge of ZANU-PF and have ties to ZANU-PF dissidents. They could be of invaluable assistance in strategizing as the MDC navigates the post-election minefield, and in putting together an effective anti-Mugabe coalition.

BOST